

January 7, 1958

Dr. S. Gaylen Bradley
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University of Minnesota
The Medical School
Minneapolis 14, Minnesota

Dear Gaylen:

Bernstein

Your letters have been our first news as regards Alec's tangible intentions, though this did seem to be in the wind when we saw him last March. Alec has a lot of talent and experience and I do not doubt that a worthwhile position is going to be available for him in the United States. But it would be unfortunate for all parties concerned if he accepted a position that did not match his particular abilities.

Frankly I do not think that Alec is the man for your particular position. His genetic insight is rather limited, in fact he would probably have to rely very heavily on you. In a program such as you and Dr. Syvertson contemplate he might conceivably be a very effective second in command but I strongly doubt whether he has either the technical background or the quality of leadership and motivation to be the responsible leader of such a pioneering research program. Alec has a good background in enteric bacteriology and more recently in phage work and in my opinion it would be nearly disastrous if he discounted this investment in favor of a new program. He is just not that sort of adaptable or inquisitive type of researcher. On the other hand he would make an absolutely first rate director of a public health laboratory where he had responsibilities for the direction of routine work and the maintenance of a research program involving clinical or public health material in addition. I would have no hesitation at all in recommending him strongly for such a position but the program that you have in mind, it seems to me, requires diametrically opposite attainments. The only basis on which I could conceive that this appointment might be a success would be if he were directly responsible to someone like yourself who would give the leadership and genetic insight to the program. I gather that is precisely the responsibility that you would not like to have added to your present tasks.

I certainly wish I could make an alternative recommendation to you in this field. The market is almost empty as you know. There was a chap by the name of George L. Wolff (Cancer Chemotherapy, National Service Center, NIH, Bethesda, Md.) who was looking for a university position in mammalian genetics, with some possibility of embracing the cellular genetics that you are concerned about. You might want to look him up.

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I am enclosing a couple of copies of a curriculum vitae in the thought that they might be more useful to you in that form.

Hoping to see you later on this spring,

Yours sincerely,

Joshua Lederberg
Professor of Medical Genetics

JL/ew

encl.